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HISTORICAL FRAGMENTS

MORE LIGHT ON JONATHAN CARVER

In the March, 1920 issue of this magazine was printed a noteworthy contribution by Dr. William Browning entitled, "The Early History of Jonathan Carver." Dr. Browning succeeded in clearing up for the first time the facts concerning the noted traveler's ancestry, showing with convincing force that he was of excellent descent, from the line of Robert Carver of Marshfield, brother of Governor John Carver, and that his immediate forbears and connections were among the leading men of Connecticut. Through the development of a clue to which our attention was directed by Miss Jannette Burlingham of Shullsburg, we are enabled to strengthen Dr. Browning's argument by citing certain bits of information, at least one of which has an important bearing on the question of Jonathan Carver's descent from the brother of Governor Carver.

Dr. Browning correctly supposes that David Carver of Canterbury (father of Jonathan) is identical with David Carver, son of John and grandson of Robert Carver, born at Marshfield about the year 1668, but he is unable to cite any direct proof of this identity (*Wisconsin Magazine of History*, III, 301). The missing evidence is supplied by Miss Burlingham. In Edwin R. Hodgman, *History of the Town of Westford . . . 1659-1883* (Lowell, 1883), 491, it is stated that Robert Carver located at Marshfield in 1638 and died there in 1680. His son, John, born in 1637, married Mellicent Ford of Marshfield. He died in 1679, aged forty-two years, leaving children: William, John, Robert, Eleazer, David, Elizabeth, Mercy, and Anna. "*David died in 1727 in Canterbury, Connecticut.*"¹

Certain interesting additional light on the problems raised by Dr. Browning is to be had from the history of Westford and references readily suggested by it. The date of David Carver's birth is placed by Browning as "about 1668 (anyway nearer 1670 than 1663)." On what evidence he based this deduction the writer of the present note does not know. But its essential correctness is seen from the following considerations: William

¹ Italics by the present writer.

Carver, eldest brother of David, was a notable character of Marshfield, dying in 1760, aged 102 years. He was born, therefore, some time in 1658. If we assume that the other children born to John Carver came at intervals of two years, we get 1666 as the year of David's birth. If we lengthen the interval to two and one-half years, we arrive at the year 1668. Three children were born after David, the last (on the assumption of the two and one-half year interval) about 1675, and the father died in 1679. It seems clear, from the facts noted, that David Carver could not have been born as early as 1663 and that he probably was born about 1668.

The Probate Court proceedings in settling the estate of David Carver give the name of the surviving widow as Sarah (Browning, *op. cit.*, 294). Browning shows that the wife of David and mother of Jonathan was Hannah Dyer of Weymouth. In arguing that David Carver of Weymouth and David of Canterbury are identical, he thus disposes of this discrepancy: "The name Sarah, as the widow of David, given once in the settlement of the estate, does not negative this conclusion. While it might be due to any one of several reasons, the real explanation evidently is connected with the following fact: Of the twenty-one entries of births or baptisms, as found recorded, in but one (that of Benjamin, last child of *Ensign* David) is there failure to record the mother's name. It is therefore apparent that something had happened to her before the entry was made."

In fact nothing had happened to the mother of Benjamin but something had to Hannah Carver. From the history of Westford we learn that David Carver "by his second wife, Sarah Butterfield of Chelmsford," had a son Benjamin, born in Canterbury December 10, 1722. Further, that after the death of David Carver, in 1727 Sarah "returned to her native Chelmsford." Reference to the *Chelmsford Vital Records* (pp. 37, 197) discloses that Sarah Butterfield was born September 23, 1701, and married January 14, 1721-22. Thus the fact which Browning correctly surmised stands clearly revealed. Hannah Carver died at some time subsequent to October 25, 1717 (when her daughter, Hannah, was born: Browning, *op. cit.*, 299) and prior to January 14, 1722, when David Carver entered into an old-age union with a youthful

bride, Sarah Butterfield of Chelmsford. This fact explains, incidentally, the procedure of the Probate Court in appointing one guardian for the elder children of David Carver (Jonathan, David, and Hannah), and another guardian for Benjamin, the offspring of the second marriage.

It seems proper to place on permanent record the foregoing facts which contribute in however slight degree to the elucidation of the interesting and long-baffling problem of Jonathan Carver's ancestry, which Dr. Browning has solved in such notable fashion in the pages of this magazine for March, 1920.

M. M. QUAIFFE

THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN

Americans ever remember that it was our action that awoke Japan from her age-long slumber behind the seclusion of barred ports. In 1853 Matthew C. Perry, younger brother of the victor of Lake Erie, sailed four ships of war into the forbidden harbor of Tokio and insisted on the reception of an address from the president of the United States to the Mikado of Japan. The island nation was thrown into great excitement and consternation. Thousands of its people thronged the heights of the harbor to view the "black ships" that portended change and confusion. None had ever seen vessels propelled without oars or sails; and the slow, majestic motion of steam vessels seemed to them a sort of foreign magic. After several days of negotiation arrangements were made for the ceremonious reception of the naval commander by representatives of the Japanese government. July 14 Perry went on shore with a full escort of officers, sailors, and marines, marshaled by two brass bands, preceded by ensign bearers of the United States flag. Five thousand Japanese soldiers were drawn up to receive the unbidden strangers. Under a vast tent the government representatives welcomed Perry with great honors and took from his hand the golden casket conveying the message to their emperor.

Somewhere in the mighty crowd that witnessed this ceremony was a Japanese artist who perpetuated his impression of the Americans in a characteristic wood-block print. A copy of this historic relic has recently been presented to our Society by Mr.